

20th CONGRESS,  
*1st Session.*

[Doc. No. 41.]

HO. OF REPS.  
*Executive.*

ANNUAL REPORT—COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

## MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

## THE ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Commissioner of the Public Buildings.

---

JANUARY 4, 1828.

Read, and referred to the Committee on Public Buildings.

---

WASHINGTON :

PRINTED BY GALES & SEATON.

1828.

[Doc No. 41]

110 or 115

[Doc No. 41]

110 or 115

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE PUBLIC BUILDINGS

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:  
In compliance with the Act of the 23d of January, 1818,  
of the Public Buildings, which in conformity with a resolution of the  
Senate of the 23d of January, 1818,  
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

SECRETARY OF THE UNITED STATES

THE ANNUAL REPORT

of the Secretary of the Public Buildings

WASHINGTON, 3d January, 1828.

*To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:*

I transmit to Congress the Annual Report of the Commissioner of the Public Buildings, made in conformity with a resolution of the Senate of the 28th of January, 1818.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Office of Commissioner of Public Buildings

Washington, Dec. 31, 1907.

To the President of the United States

Sir: The expenditures during the present year amounting to \$1,000,000 for the improvement of the Capitol grounds and adjacent grounds, including the construction of a new entrance to the Capitol, the improvement of the grounds at the War and Navy Departments, and the improvement of the grounds at the State Department, are as follows:

Improvement of the Capitol grounds and adjacent grounds	\$1,000,000
Improvement of the grounds at the War and Navy Departments	1,400,000
Improvement of the grounds at the State Department	500,000
Total	\$2,900,000

I beg leave to refer to the accompanying report of the Architect of the Capitol for the year 1907, and to the report of the Architect of the Capitol for the year 1906, for a full and complete statement of the work done at the Capitol and the grounds adjacent thereto. A full and complete statement of the work done at the War and Navy Departments, and at the State Department, is also contained in the accompanying report of the Architect of the Capitol for the year 1907.

With the highest respect,  
Yours most obedient servant,

J. ELGAR

Report of the proceedings on the Public Buildings for the year 1907.

WASHINGTON, December 31, 1907.

Sir: In presenting a report of the proceedings on the Capitol of the United States of the past season, I commence by observing that by the direction of the Committee on Public Buildings of the last Congress, a statement was made of all the unfinished work on the Capitol grounds and adjacent grounds, and estimates were prepared of the probable expense of completing the same. These have been submitted to the committee, they expressed their resolution to have the work executed with all possible dispatch, and directed me to have the work executed with all possible dispatch, and obtaining as great a reduction as possible in the cost of the work. In consequence of the sanction of Congress, and in consequence of the sanction of the committee, the number of workmen required, and efforts made to obtain a reduction of cost, only a small addition could be made of such as were

## OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS,

Washington, Dec. 31, 1827.

*To the President of the United States :*

SIR : The expenditures, during the present year, on objects in my charge, have been as follows, viz :

Capitol, grounds, and engine-house	-	-	-	\$100,503	13
Penitentiary	-	-	-	47,802	48
Jail in Alexandria	-	-	-	10,686	03
Jail in Washington	-	-	-	1,609	32
Improving the square near the President's House	-	-	-	2,891	92
Improvements at the War and Navy Departments	-	-	-	1,495	35
Fire apparatus	-	-	-	975	29

I beg leave to refer to the accompanying report of the Architect for an exposition of the state of the work at the Capitol and Penitentiary. A jail, of durable materials and workmanship, has been erected at Alexandria, and is now ready for occupancy ; but some further expenditures in and about the building would be very beneficial.

I have the honor to remain,

With the highest respect, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

J. ELGAR.

---

*Report of the proceedings on the Public Buildings for the year 1827.*

WASHINGTON, December 27, 1827.

SIR : In presenting a report of the proceedings on the Capitol of the United States, of the past season, I commence by observing, that, by the direction of the Committee on Public Buildings of the last Congress, a statement was made of all the unfinished work on the Capitol, its approaches and dependencies ; and estimates were furnished of the probable expense of completing the same. These having been submitted to the committee, they expressed their resolution to have the work executed with all possible despatch, and directed special exertions to be made for collecting materials, and obtaining an additional number of workmen. These views of the committee received the sanction of Congress, and, in consequence, at the opening of the season, materials were procured, and efforts made to obtain the number of workmen required ; but, notwithstanding the encouragement offered, only a small addition could be made of such as were



effective and serviceable. In proceeding upon the work, attention was directed to such parts as were most essential, and which would produce a general approach towards the completion of the building, and regulation of the grounds. A flight of steps on the west side, leading to the first terrace, has been completed; the semicircular wall, with the arches for wood vaults, capable of containing four hundred cords, with two flights of steps, leading to the upper terrace over the vaults, are also finished. A large quantity of earth has been removed from the easterly part of Capitol Square, to bring it to its proper graduation, and is deposited, in part, on the west side, to form the terrace and glacis; also, to raise Pennsylvania Avenue to the right ascent, and otherwise disposed, to bring the contiguous public grounds into order on the south side of the Capitol. Broad pavements of stone flags are laid on the east front, and on the north and south ends of the building, and brick pavement of the same width continued to the north and south entrances, over the circular terrace, and along the line of the west side of the square. A rich cast-iron railing borders the terrace round the building, and the grounds to the west. The garden grounds to the east are enclosed by a wrought-iron railing, conformable to that which surrounds the square. Stone piers to the north and south entrances, and to the square, have been raised to the height to receive the railing, but are not completed.

Considerable progress has been made in the sculpture in the panel over the principal east door of the Rotundo, and in the tympanum of the pediment of the portico; and the whole of the work of the portico has been painted, where it was not encumbered with scaffolds.

A house has been built to accommodate the fire-engine and apparatus, furnished by order of Congress; and every convenience is provided for the use of the fire company, to make effectual their services, which are voluntary and gratuitous. A bell of sufficient size is placed on the tower, to be used in necessary cases of alarm from fire.

In the interior of the building, the sculptures of the Rotundo have been finished, and the walls painted. Two warm air stoves, of the most powerful and improved construction, have been placed below, with apertures in the floor, for the admission of warm air, to correct the dampness of the Rotundo, the effect of which cannot, however, be fully felt, until the opening in the centre shall be closed, either solidly or by a sky-light. The floor of the Representatives' Hall has been taken up and relaid, after the space was filled solidly with bricks; this was done with a design to prevent the noise arising from walking, and to lessen the reverberation of sounds: the effect is found to be very advantageous. The alterations in the Senate Chamber have been effected, and a private stair, for the convenience of the members, has been contrived and executed in a temporary manner.

The above is an abstract of all that could be effected during the past season, with the utmost diligence and attention of the superintendents and workmen. The following remain to be done, to bring the work on this great national edifice to a close: To finish three courts in the interior of the building; the piers, gates, and entrances

on every side of the enclosure; a quantity of pavement at the West approach, and round the areas of the wood vaults: a flight of steps on each flank of the Western terrace, the materials for which are provided. The building also requires a general painting and repair. I would suggest the necessity of renewing the stairs to the Representatives' Hall, with the harder and much superior stone now used for such purposes; and the expediency of paving with flags the passages, now covered with tiles, which are much worn, and irregular. A gallery is also wanted in the Senate Chamber, to prevent the necessity of admitting strangers on the floor: A design for this purpose will be offered for the consideration of the Senate. A general attention to the regulation and improvement of the grounds, will be required, and some accommodation for necessary stabling, and the convenience of such police officers as may be appointed for the guard and security of the Capitol. All these objects may be effected in the ensuing season, with a moderate addition to the unexpended appropriation of the past year.

In closing this report, I ask leave to add, that the Rotundo cannot be considered complete, while the four large panels are suffered to remain vacant; and to suggest a hope, that measures may be taken to supply them with paintings, conformable to the others, on great national subjects. In the mean time, frames might be made at present with more economy than at any time after the workmen are discharged, and their appearance would give an air of finish to the room.

I have taken the liberty to make this report, a statement of the work executed, and of what remains to be done, that the whole might be exhibited in one view; which is respectfully presented by

CHARLES BULFINCH,

*Architect of Capitol of United States.*

JOSEPH ELGAR Esq.

*Commissioner of Public Buildings.*

---

December 28, 1827.

SIR: It was the intention of the Superintendent of the works at the Penitentiary to give a particular and detailed report of the proceedings at that establishment during the past year; but he has been prevented by a necessary absence from the city. I, therefore, offer the following general statement:

In the principal building, four stories of cells, faced with stone, and arched with brick, have been built, and the iron doors to the same prepared; a roof has been raised over the mass of cells, and the surrounding areas, which is now in progress of slating. Two wings are finished, containing the keepers' rooms, kitchens, infirma-

ry. &c. The surrounding wall, twenty feet high, has been built except the front entrance. The following remain to be done : To plaster the principal building ; to raise the stairs and galleries to the several stories ; to build the stone gateway, and the brick appendages of receivers and porters' lodges ; and to put on the stone coping of the wall. The stone is provided, and the workmen are employed in preparing it.

No arrangements have been made for workshops. The extent and nature of these will depend on the system of employment and discipline which may be directed by Congress.

It is presumed that the whole may be completed early in the next season.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES BULFINCH.

JOSEPH ELGAR, Esq.

*Commissioner of Public Buildings.*